

**AUGUST'S ABUSIVE ACT REFLECTED IN SARA GRUEN'S  
*WATER FOR ELEPHANTS* NOVEL (2006):  
A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITISISM**



**PUBLICATION ARTICLES**

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**by**

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MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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APPROVAL

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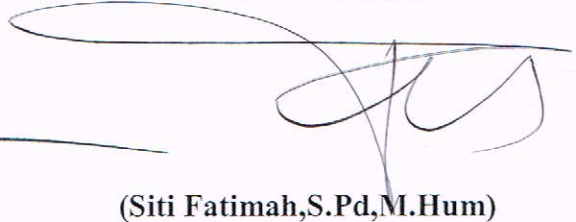
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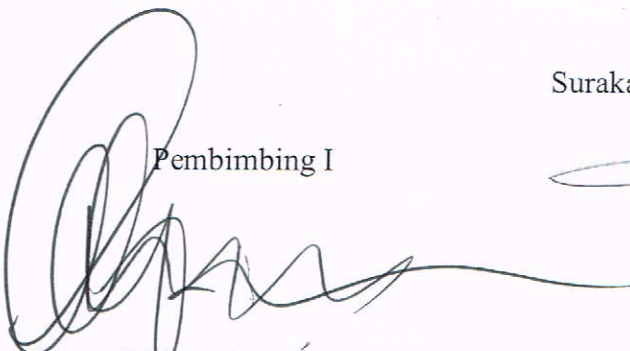
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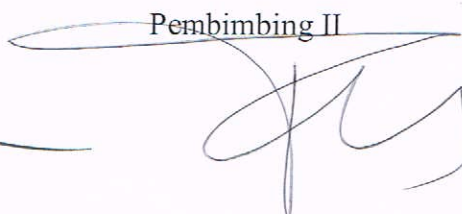
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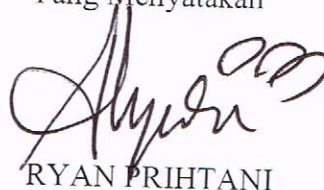
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**AUGUST'S ABUSIVE ACT REFLECTED IN SARA GRUEN'S  
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**ABSTRACT**

**RYAN PRIHTANI A320 090 181 , AUGUST'S ABUSIVE ACT REFLECTED IN SARA GRUEN'S WATER FOR ELEPHANTS NOVEL (2006): A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITISISM.RESEARCH PAPER MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA 2013.**

The research is proposed to analyze how August's abusive act reflected in *Water for Elephants* novel by Psychoanalytic Criticism. There are two objectives: the first is to analyze the novel based on its structural elements and technical elements, and the second is to analyze the main character's personality using a psychoanalytic approach.

This study is a qualitative study, using Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephant* novel 2006 as of structural elements, and the secondary data. The primary data source is *Water for Elephants* novel which is written by Sara Gruen , and the secondary data are some articles, book of literary and internet related to the subject. The method of collecting data in this research is library research by reading some related books and articles, accessing internet, taking notes of important parts, arranging, and drawing conclusion the data. In analyzing the data, the resecher employs descriptive analysis.

The results showed that this novel illustrates how abusive towards fellow human beings will make us lose the people we love. One thing that can destroy human's dreams is abusive. Thus, in order to keep away from abusive acts is caring and loving people around.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic Criticism, abusive, id, ego, superego

## **A. Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Nowadays, there are many things occur in people's life. Happiness, sadness, anxieties, even abusive can come in people's life every time and everywhere. As we know, in this era, we can see abusive action published in various mass media. News on television, newspaper even on a television programs like serial, advertising, and movies shows abusive incidents. It may begin from light abusive until heavy abusive which causes fatality.

Abuse can be physical, emotional, financial and material or sexual. Physical abuse means any form of violence such as hitting, punching, pulling hair, and kicking. Abuse can occur in both dating relationship and friendship.([kidshealth.org/teen/.../family\\_abuse.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/.../family_abuse.html))

Emotional abuse (stuff like teasing, bullying, and humiliating others) can be difficult to recognize because it doesn't leave any visible scars. Threats, intimidation, putdowns, and betrayal are all harmful forms of emotional abuse that can really hurt — not just during the time its happening, but long after too.

One of the best novel that expresses about abusive act in *Water for Elephants* novel. It is fiction novel writer by Sara Gruen in 2006, that tells about other side of circus in Jacob Jankowski life.

Despite the story of novel which includes and shows about abusive that compatible with Psychoanalytic Theory above, there are some reasons

that caused the writer chose this novel. The first reason why the writer chooses this novel is this novel gives people knowledge and learning about the meaning of friendship and building trust with friends. Such as friendship of Marlena and Rosie. The second reason is *Water for Elephants* gives moral value that everything will become happy ending if we work hard. The last reason why the writer chooses this novel is because this novel has gotten many awards. Those awards include the 2007 Book Sense Book of the Year Award, the Cosmo Fun Fearless Fiction Award, and the Bookbrowse Diamond Award for Most Popular Book, the Friends of American Literature Adult Fiction Award and the ALA/Alex Award 2007.

The abusive of the *Water for Elephants* novel is reflected in the character of August. Abusive seen from the way he manages the business of circus, where he train the animal to cruel, an important animal to tame a short time, the abusive nature of August is also very apparent when he was getting rid of people who have no use for him.

Based on background above, the writer interested in analyzing the major character using psychological approach by Sigmund Freud. The title chosen **AUGUST'S ABUSIVE ACT REFLECTED IN SARA GRUEN'S *WATER FOR ELEPHANTS* NOVEL (2006): A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITISISM**

## **2. Previous Study**

Abusive act reflected in *Water for Elephant* novel as far as the writer knows that is no such kind of research analyzing this novel whether in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Surakarta Region. So it is the first research on this novel.

## **3. Problem Statment**

How is the main character's personality using an individual psychoanalytic approach? and how is August's abusive act reflected in Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephant* novel?

## **4. Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of the study is limiting the broad problem areas in order to have distinctive focus. In this research, the writer wants to describe the minor's character personality on a novel using Psychoanalytic Approach. Hence the writer limits her research on Abusive act reflected on *Water for Elephant* novel using Psychoanalytic Approach.

## **5. Objectives of the Study**

To analyze August's abusive act reflected in Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephants* novel and to analyze the main character's personality using an individual Psychoanalytic approach.



## **6. Benefit on the Study**

### **a. Theoretical Benefit**

The study is hoped to give new contribution and new information to the large body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *Water for Elephant* novel.

### **b. Practical Benefit**

The study is hoped to give deeper understanding and enrich both knowledge and experience of the writer, generally for other student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and also can be used as a reference by other universities that are interested in literary study on the novel based on an individual psychoanalytic approach.

## **7. Underlying Theory**

### **a. Notion of Psychoanalysis**

Psychoanalysis is the part of psychological study that focuses on the personality of human being. It is a method of therapy for personality disturbances and technique for investigating an individual's unconscious thoughts and feelings (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 86).

There are three type of psychoanalytic personality structure: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. The *id*, like the savage, wants to satisfy these primitive drives in the most direct and immediate way. The *ego* is the person's view of physical and social reality. It tries to satisfy the *id* impulses by taking into account the possibilities of reward and

punishment that exist in a situation. The *superego* represents our conscience. It includes the moral values of right and wrong that are largely instilled in us by our parents.

#### b. Notion of Abuse

According to Boyack (1997:137) is a growing social concern, but it is not new. Too many older Canadians have suffered abuse and neglect at the hands of family members and caregivers for too many years. What is new is that we have a growing awareness and concern about elder abuse, putting a new face to this type of family violence. Like other types of domestic violence, elder abuse is extremely complex. It is a combination of many factors, from psychological to economic as well as the mental and physical conditions of the victim and the abuser. These factors do not usually operate in isolation. Instead, they tend to function as complex dimensions, interacting in ways uniquely dependent on the victim, perpetrator and the situation. Research into elder abuse is in its early stages. However, a few theories are emerging that address the cause of elder abuse.

### **B. Research Method**

#### **1. Type of the Study**

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while the data sources are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the novel using individual psychoanalytic approach. The

qualitative data is based on the novel *Water for Elephant* by Sara Gruen

## **2. Object of the Study**

The object of this study is *Water for Elephant* novel. This novel published in the United States on 2006 by Sara Gruen released. It will be analyzed through Psychoanalytic Perspective.

## **3. Type of the Data and The Data Source**

There are two types of the data that are needed to do this research as follows: The primary data source of the study, is *Water for Elephant* novel which is written by Sara Gruen and published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill and secondary data source consist of the other data such as articles, books of literary, internet and reference which are relevant with this study to get other relevant information.

## **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

The technique of collecting data is the library research, it can be obtained by some steps as follows: Reading some related books and articles related to the object of study, accessing internet to get several information ,taking notes of important parts in both the primary data and secondary data, arranging the data into several categories, and drawing conclusion based on the data analysis.

## **5. Technique of the Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the researcher employs descriptive qualities analysis; in which the data will be collected, described and analyzed. The researcher concerns with the relationship between the novel and the

individual psychoanalytic theory to analyze the major character reflected in *Water for Elephant* novel.

### **C. Research Finding and Discussion**

In this research finding, the writer analysis some points in order to analyze *Water for Elephants* novel.

#### **1. Analysis the Structural Element of *Water for Elephants* Novel**

##### **a. Characteristic Element**

There are two kinds of character in the movie, namely major and minor characters. One of the major characters is Jacob Jankowski , He is a young man of thirty years old, Jacob and Family come from Poland but they are life in America. Jacob Jankowski is a fact checker who wants to become a writer.

I'm twenty-three and sitting beside Catherine Hale; or rather, she's sitting beside me, because she came into the lecture hall after I did, sliding nonchalantly across the bench until our thighs were touching and then shrinking away with a blush as though the contact were accidental. (WE, 2006: 31)

One of the minor characters of this novel is August. He is Marlena's husband and the head animal trainer. As a classic Batterer, he is charming but brutal, both for the humans and animals.

August's a funny one, and I don't mean funny ha-ha. You be careful. He don't like no one questioning his authority. And he has his moments, if you know what I mean."(WE, 2006 :93)

##### **b. Setting**

The setting of Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephants* is written in two different places and times. They are in Benzini Brother

Circus, it occurs when Jacob gets 23 years old. The second is Nursing Home activity, when Jacob gets 93 years old.

c. Plot

1) Exposition

The exposition of the story begins when a student Jacob Jankowski in cornel university veterinarian. He had to finish his education because both her parents died. Then it resulted in Jacob must look for a job for forwarding his life.

2) Complication

A complication occurs when Jacob Jankowski gets a job in the circus called Benzini Brother. Then, it is begun when Jacob Jankowski acquainted with Marlana. Because of that, Jacob Jankowski falls in love with Marlana at the first sight

3) Climax

Climax happens when August finally knows whether Marlana and Jacob love each others. August feels angry and he wants to kill Jacob. But, in this case, Marlana prefers to go with Jacob than August. That makes August angrier and then he plans to kill Jacob.

4) Resolution

As usual, after the climax, the story concludes with a resolution. In this story, Benzini Brother gets bankruptcy and followed by August death. Then, Jacob and Marlana finally live together, and they become a sweet and happy family.

## 2. Psychoanalytic Analysis

### a. Analysis August Personality

In this session the researcher explains about Victor's personality and analyze his *id*, *superego*, and *ego*.

#### 1) August's *Id*

*Id* is the basic system of personality to satisfy the need, wished by the human. This tendency of the *id* to devote itself exclusively to immediate reduction or tension is called the pleasure principle

First, *Id* is shown by August when he order his men to flog a horse's ass in order to lead his horses being fast.

"What the hell are you doing? Those horses have been on a train for three days—get out there on the pavement and hard-ass them so they don't go soft". (WE, 2006:118)

Second, *id* is shown when August forbid Jacob not to give any water for the animals, whereas the weather is so hot and dry.

"I'll be along in a minute," I say. "I need to check the other menagerie." Because of the peculiar status of the Fox Brothers baggage stock—whose numbers have been depleting all afternoon—I've seen for myself that they were fed and watered. But I have yet to lay eyes on their exotics or ring stock.

"No," August says firmly. "You'll join me now."

I look over, surprised by his tone. "All right. Sure," I say. "Do you know if they got fed and watered?"

"They'll get fed and watered. Eventually."

"What?" I say.

"They'll get fed and watered. Eventually."

"August, it's damned near ninety degrees. We can't leave them without at least water."

"We can, and we will. It's how Uncle Al does business (WE, 2006:120)

*Id* third was shown when August strains Rosie. He forces Rosie in order that Rosie would follow August's wants and instructions,

August smacks her from behind, and Rosie hurries a few steps forward. When August catches up, he whacks her again, this time hard enough that she raises her trunk, bellows, and scampers sideways. August lets loose a long string of curses and runs up beside her, swinging the bull hook and driving the pick end into her shoulder. Rosie whimpers and this time doesn't move an inch. Even from this distance, we can see that she's trembling. (WE, 2006:140)

## 2) August's *Ego*

*Ego* was shown when Jacob asked for the work to August. It can be seen that August *ego* defeats his *Id*. Jacob tells Marlena, weather her horse is sick. But, Jacob doesn't want Marlena sad, even crying.

"Marlena said Silver Star was off," says August. "Wanted me to get the advance man to arrange for a vet. Didn't seem to understand that the advance man was gone out in advance, hence the name."

"What are you suggesting?" says Uncle Al.

"Let the kid have a look in the morning."

"And where do you propose we put him for tonight? We're already past capacity." He snatches his cigar from the ashtray and taps it on the edge. "I suppose we could just send him out on the flats." (WE, 2006:68)

## 3) August's *Superego*

*Superego* is the conscience owned by human. According to the *Id* example which tells about August tortures Rosie, on the other hand, August has *superego*. The *superego* appears when

August deals with Jacob to kill Silver Star, with a reason for reducing Silver Star's suffering

"In that case I'll take my chances and stay right here when the train pulls out. But either way, that horse needs putting down. (WE, 2006:105)

According to the explanation above, August's personality is not balanced among his *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. His *id* is always pressing his *ego*, and his *superego* does not have enough power to warn the *ego*. In this case, we can say that August is really a selfish person because he is always ambitious to reach only what he wants to his happiness and his *superego* takes a part rarely.

b. Psychoanalytic Issue

In this novel, psychoanalytic issues which are used by the researcher are abusive. Actually, abusive characteristic is a natural quality of a human being when he or she is under pressure. However, the abusive attribute is so dominating an individual with the excessively high temperament when it is contributed by a condition forcing him/her to do as such. Abusive characteristic can be seen in character August of the novel "*Water for Elephant*". In this story, August is a brutal leader and he will easily harm or kill anyone who resists him. For example, August's brutal action of first aid, he whipped his horses in an attempt of making them moving. In this event, August's *id* defeats his *ego* or *superego* that he should prepare



them early so that he would not whip them. The second id is when August prohibited Jacob to feed animals. In this matter, August is defeated by his *ego*, but his *superego* is successfully defeated by his *ego*. It is because of limited maintenance fund so August is correct logically to prevent Jacob to feed animals in order to save money and the circus can survive.

Example of third August is abusive action can be seen when he tortured Rossie to make her being obedient and trained. In this matter, August is fully controlling his *ego* and *superego*. He thinks that the most important is to domesticate Rossie for profit.

And the final case is when August and his uncle Al thrown away camel and kinko. His *ego* was emerging when he should hire employees who can work, and his *superego* was emerging when he saw his camel get illness severely. However, his *id* defeats his *ego* and *superego* because he considered it will harm his circus monetarily.

After reading the novel "*Water for Elephant*", the reader may find abusive actions of August. Perhaps, money is very important in the world because it will facilitate us to reach the world but the world will not be attractive when there is no one who loves us, and love can be achieved by caring for each other.

## **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **1. Conclusion**

Referring to the statement of the problem and the analysis in the previous chapter, the researcher finally takes some conclusions. Every person must have a bad side and have different temperament levels. Those facts may lead abusive acts like what August did to his circus and even to someone he loves, Marlena. Those are the reasons why August can lose his circus business, his wife and the worst, his life.

Based on the analysis, the researcher draws if everyone has to treat someone they love well. Moreover, in Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephants* the researcher finds that one of the minor characters' personality has the wrong way to treat someone he loves. It can a paradigm for other people to try doing the best for their special one. Therefore, it includes the psychoanalytic phenomena.

### **2. Suggestion**

The researcher has chosen Psychoanalytic Approach, to analyze this Novel. This study can still be improved. It is widely possible for another researcher to apply different approach such as a Humanistic Psychological Approach to analyze abusive and love needs of someone, especially August. This approach toward the same novel will bring new perspective in gaining more understanding about the novel and ideas beyond it.

The researcher realizes that this study is far from being perfect because of the limitation of the researcher's ability and knowledge. The researcher hopes that this study can be useful for the readers as the comparison to the other research in widening the knowledge of literary study.

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